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EVENTS PRECEDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE PACT

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Abstract

This paper presents the events preceding the establishment of the North Atlantic Alliance and the role played by every international power in its accomplishment. There is also presented a chronology of international facts and factors that led and influenced this major world treaty.

Key words: *alliance, doctrine, history, events*

Introduction

Certainly, the statements of the victorious powerful promising leaders met the hopes of the people for peace, security, cooperation and also proclaimed the United Nations Charter Preamble.

Paradoxically, the noble goals to crush the aggressors unified the great powers which made an alliance that was strong (in which western democracies had fought with great power with the Communist totalitarian regime).

Unfortunately, this unit could not have continuity, because, before the end of the antifascist war between the West and the Soviet Union serious differences and disagreements appeared.

The way in which the Russians have fulfilled their military obligations has made the West look with confidence to them, as true friends.

1.1 End of World War II

End of the Second World War on 8 and 9 May 1945 (for some units and Romanian including Austria and Czechoslovakia until 12 May) meant the victory of the Great Coalition (the given name): U.S., USSR, England and United Nations against the Axis powers.

There should not be overlooked that the capitulation of the Third Reich also counted France among the winners of the signatories.

Also, in the Pacific and Asia regions, the great conflagration ended on September 2nd with the Japanese surrender to the U.S., China, England and the USSR.

Yalta myth has developed that, somehow or other, Roosevelt and Churchill gave Stalin Eastern Europe.

In the Yalta agreements, it was agreed that people in these countries should decide their own government through free elections.

Stalin, the Soviet political leader believed that the Red Army would be accepted as a liberating army.

Kremlin leaders have been very affected when they discovered that the red army was regarded by the Polish, Romanian and others as a new invasion force.

According to the Westerners, Stalin hoped to reach the Atlantic, this being one of the reasons for not having fulfilled the Yalta agreements.

One more reason which led the Soviets to believe in this, was the existence of the strong communist parties in France and Italy.

In these circumstances, the Communist leaders of these countries have reported to Moscow that they could take power, which is possible, if the U.S. had not helped to rebuild Western Europe.

General Marshall, Army Chief of Staff of the U.S., for example, in a telegram on September 9th 1944, acknowledges Harry Hopkins, the closest adviser and influential foreign policy of President Roosevelt that the relations with the Soviets, now when the end of the war could be seen, took a surprising obvious turn evident in the last two months.¹

1.2 Truman Doctrine

There should also be shown the role of President Truman and the Republican senator in Michigan, Vandenberg, who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Actions taken have included aid to Greece which was subjected to the communist attack, and Turkey that was threatened in that period.

The Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Belgium, the future NATO General Secretary, Paul Henri Speak, assessing the Soviet positions in the war, said that: "One great power is out of the war by conquering other territories, and this power is the Soviet Union".

During the Second World War, with its policy, Stalin had managed to annex Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, parts of Finland, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, a total of 500 000 km² with a population of over 23 million inhabitants.

After the victory over the Third Reich, this expansion has been strengthened by the establishment of the zone of influence and control in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany, where, between 1945 - 1948 the pro-Soviet governments and Communist regimes were installed.

During the Yalta Conference, Churchill praised him that "Marshal Stalin's life is the most precious for the hopes and hearts of all".

Also in the spring of 1945, in the House of Commons, the British Prime Minister and Tory leader gave a blank check to the USSR, declaring: "I know of no other government to better fulfill its obligations than the government of Soviet Russia".

After the sudden death of President Roosevelt, the new U.S. chief executive, Harry S. Truman asked Harry Hopkins to go to Moscow to discuss with Stalin the new guidelines of the White House dweller and to clarify many rough seas appeared between allies.

Although health was very grave, he went to the Soviet capital, where he had several hours of talks with Stalin.

In the two weeks he exposed Stalin's new administration, the hopes and determination to go forward under the Yalta agreements, the so hard drawn new postwar policy towards

¹ NATO-Partnership and Cooperation Handbook, Office of the NATO Information and Press, Brussels, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 7.

cooperation and trust, clearly indicating a series of U.S. grievances for Soviet actions and attitudes including what happened in Romania by Dr. Petru Groza's government imposed in March 1945. Stalin recalled that the U.S. attitude toward the Soviet Union has cooled long after Hitler's defeat, alluding to the huge Soviet human sacrifices.

By the politico-diplomatic solutions found and the established arrangements, Hopkins's visit to Moscow was assessed as a success, though, there immediately reappeared new grounds and sources of tension.

By the views expressed by Stalin and the Soviet delegation to the Conference of Heads of State and government of the three great powers at Potsdam in July-August 1945, just six months after the Yalta Conference, they let the Soviet Union see clearly what was intended.²

If the argument on its security interests in Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Germany were seen as explanations of Anglo-American postwar Soviet policy, its applications to include Communists in the Greek government, the Soviet interests in Tangier and Libya as the desire to annex the two provinces of Turkey and to control the Black Sea straits, have been taken as warning signals to the West.

It was clear that substantial changes had begun to disintegrate the alliance and the political atmosphere.

It must be remembered that the overall political climate in the West was very supportive and friendly with Stalin and the Soviet Union.

The Potsdam Conference, which will be in effect (although the few common decisions taken by Heads of Governments of the three great powers), was rather a meeting of the disagreements than one of the agreements.³

This confrontation will be considered as a first point in the early Cold War history.

The World War II -the influential diplomat, Deputy Secretary of State, a member of the circle of political analysis of the interwar years in Riga, Joseph Grew, wrote that there was a transfer from totalitarian dictatorship and the power of Germany and Japan to the Soviet Russia.

The awakening of the West was a gradual process, but, they were puzzled at first by what was happening around them.

America was certainly unprepared for a political war, lacking the experience and tools - a famous analyst, Walter Laqueur, writes. He pointed out that "the West was essentially in a defensive posture - it had few means to cope with the dynamic and aggressive Soviet policy and the communist parties.

Awakening the West, which was really the way to create the North Atlantic Alliance, included a number of challenges in the Soviet and early post-war Western countermeasures. It included, however, the major political events that have forged a conception and gave birth to a project.

Such events were: the one on 6 March 1945 in Romania, Churchill's speech in Fulton, George Marshall's proposals, the study by George F. Kenan, the famous American diplomat who served in Moscow as head of diplomacy.⁴

The Truman Doctrine, practically a political statement submitted on 12 March 1947 by the U.S. President, stated that any direct or indirect aggression which threatened U.S. peace also involved U.S. security.

² Andre Fontaine - History of the Cold War, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p. 29.

³ NATO-Partnership and Cooperation Handbook, Office of the NATO Information and Press, Brussels, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 10.

⁴ NATO-Partnership and Cooperation Handbook, Office of the NATO Information and Press, Brussels, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 14.

As for the above statement, it appears to be another important moment in which a large confrontation with the USSR began, a confrontation which appeared in the history for the next four decades as the Cold War.⁵

At the Potsdam Conference (July 17 to August 2, 1945) President Truman attacked in force, protesting that the Yalta agreements were not respected for Romania and Bulgaria.

Between 1945 - 1947, the Americans had already introduced in the European economy 14 billion U.S. dollars through international organizations or through bilateral agreements.

But instead of improving the economic situation of Europe - especially the agricultural and financial - it became worse.

1.3 The Marshall Plan

After the arrival of General George C. Marshall as the head of the State Department in January 1947, "impoundment policy" began to take shape.

On 5 June 1947, the Secretary of State officially launched the U.S. plan to help Europe. In that day at Harvard, he announced the European Recovery Programme (European Recovery Program - ERP). Their policy was not directed against a country and a doctrine but against hunger, desperation and chaos.

Its purpose had to be the revival in the world economy that would operate to allow the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions could exist. The aid came in the form of grants (85%) and long-term loans (15%).

For the European countries which could accept that, it was a huge incentive. Here is a statistic of the amounts - in dollars - which were received in April 1948 (when Congress passed a law) by June 1952: United Kingdom - 3.389 billion, France - 2.7 billion, Italy - 1.508 billion, Germany - 1.4 billion; Netherlands - 1.083 billion, Greece - 708 million, Austria - 677 million, Belgium and Luxembourg - 559 million, Denmark - 273 million, Norway - 255 million, Turkey - 225 million, Ireland - 147 million, Sweden - 107 million, Portugal - 51 million, Iceland - 29 million.

The Russian historian, Mikhail Narinski, based on his research in the Soviet archives, says that Moscow has reacted hastily and disorderly in announcing the Marshall Plan.

After the Paris Conference (June 29-July 2, 1947), the great wartime alliance ended and installed in its place a policy of confrontation.

On 11 July 1947, representatives of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, together with the originators, France and Britain, met in Paris.

The next day, the European Economic Cooperation Committee was created, whose role was to provide U.S. government information about resources and needs of the 16 participating countries, and to forecast for the next four years.

In September 1947, Stalin, who was on the offensive, created the Cominform, the new coordinating body of the communist parties. On this occasion, on 5 October 1947, Andrei Jdanov resumed from the point of view of Moscow Truman's idea stated on March 12: "in the world two camps have been formed, on one side the anti-democratic imperialist camp whose main role is to establish global dominance of the American imperialism, and on the other hand, the anti-imperialist and democratic camp, whose main goal is to dig imperialism, strengthen democracy and liquidate the remnants of fascism".⁶

However, a positive solution of the relations between the USSR and the great powers was tried.

1.4 First steps towards the emergence of the North Atlantic Pact

⁵ Andre Fontaine - History of the Cold War, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p. 42.

⁶ The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, 4th of April 1949, p. 12.

In December 1947, the U.S. Conference of the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France and the USSR in London, ended in failure in the collaboration of the four great powers.

A milestone occurred on March 12, when important discussions initiated on April 16, 1948 between George C. Marshall and the Secretary of State Robert M. Lovett, together with Senator Vandenberg and Connolly, about safety issues in the North Atlantic.

In agreement with the State Department, Senator Vandenberg had prepared a resolution that recommended U.S. association based on a constitutional process, with such regional arrangements based on collective and mutual help and continuous and effective self-help.

It also recommended that the U.S. government's goal should be to contribute to peacekeeping, clearly stating their determination to exercise the right of individual or collective self-defense, that Article 51 (in the United Nations Charter), where there would be an attack that would threaten national security.⁷

On 17 March 1948 in Brussels, representatives of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain signed a common defense treaty, pledging to strengthen economic and cultural ties, to resist the dangers of ideological, political and military, which could become a direct threat to the signatories.⁸

On 11 April 1948, General George C. Marshall and Secretary of State Robert M. Lovett initiated discussions with Senator Vandenberg and Connolly on security issues in the North Atlantic.

On 16 April 1948, representatives of 16 countries and military commanders of the Western occupation zones in Germany have initialed the document that gave birth to the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OECE).

U.S. Senate adopted on June 11, 1948 a resolution advocating the right of individual or collective self-defense, where an attack might occur that would threaten national security.

From a legal perspective, the way was open for the establishment of the alliance, which was continued by the meeting held on 6 July 1948 in Washington between the State Department representatives and the ambassadors of Canada and Western European countries which signed the Brussels Treaty.⁹

On 25 January 1949, in response, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), with the participation of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary, led by the USSR was created.

In February 1950 Albania also joined, in September 1950, the GDR and in July 1961, Mongolia. A spectacular series of events occurred between 1947 and 1949 which rushed things. Among these there were direct threats against the sovereignty of Norway, Greece, Turkey and other allies in Western Europe, the state attack in June 1948 in Czechoslovakia, the illegal blockade of Berlin, which began in April of that year.

There followed negotiations between the signatories of the Treaty of Brussels, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Britain on the one hand, the United States, Canada and Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal with the aim of creating a single North Atlantic

The Alliance¹⁰ based on security guarantees and mutual commitments between Europe and North America.

⁷ United Nations Charter, San Francisco, 26th of June 1945, p. 1.0

⁸ Andre Fontaine - History of the Cold War, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p. 51.

⁹ Defense and security strategies of NATO and the EU at the Eastern Border, Carol I National Defense University Press, Bucharest, 2006, p. 94.

¹⁰ Paul Robinson – Dictionary of International Security, CA Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, p. 49.

On 4 April 1949, a ceremony has established the North Atlantic Organization, after signing the Washington Treaty, which established a common security system based on a partnership between the 12 signatory countries.¹¹

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¹¹ The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, 4th of April 1949, p. 34.